

## Surviving Halloween in Iraq

### Giessen Soldier recalls attack that earned him a recommendation for a Purple Heart

By Alexandra Williams  
284th Base Support Battalion Public Affairs Office

Halloween is meant to be a scary time, but for Sgt. Stephen Hall the “horror” was only too real.

Hall, a communications noncommissioned officer with Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Field Artillery Regiment, experienced a different side of the holiday while serving with his unit at the “Gunner Palace” in Baghdad. Soldiers of 2-3rd FA were attacked Oct. 31 at their headquarters in the former palace of Uday Hussein.

Hall and his commander, Capt. William Ashmore, sustained critical injuries during the attack.

Hall had just returned from a two-week Rest and Recuperation leave in Texas to visit his wife Cenonia (who had returned to the United States because of health problems), 10-year-old daughter Aerious and 7-year-old daughter Stephanie.

“I had just arrived at the camp coming from the airport and took off my gear when I was asked to go on patrol later that evening. I decided to first say hello to Master Sgt. David McCallum (he’s like our platoon father) and the new commander, Capt. Ashmore, to let them know I was back,” said Hall. “I walked to Master Sgt. McCallum’s hooch and saw him sitting at his computer. He looked up and smiled at me. Normally he calls me to his room except that night.”

“I turned around to walk to my sleeping quarters building and I saw Capt. Ashmore. He and supply sergeant Sgt. Douglas French were sitting in the yard, their backs toward me,” Hall said. “Suddenly a mortar round

came over the huge palace walls. No one heard it. It landed about two, three feet beside us, and in the corner of my eyes I saw Sgt. French and Capt. Ashmore blown out of their chairs.

“Within an instant I saw colors — white, orange and blue — and then I heard a loud boom,” Hall said. “At that time my adrenaline was still pumping and I felt no pain. I only noticed that my face was wet. I turned sideways and looked over my shoulder and then the second mortar round came in. I dove out of the way, but I caught some shrapnel.

“I remember just seeing shadows,” he said. “Someone came to help Capt. Ashmore who was burning while Sgt. French got up on his own; obviously he was not injured. Later I learned that he had not one scratch.

“All kinds of this gunfire by Iraqis followed the mortar rounds. I wanted to get my weapon so I tried to stand up, but I fell back down. First I felt real heavy and then I felt a little pain,” Hall said, adding, “but I could not tell how badly I was injured because there was still a lot of smoke. I crawled to the porch and flipped over to sit straight and I saw a lot of blood on my legs. I wanted to push myself inside the building because no one knew that

I was back from leave and out there. I knew that now I had to fend for myself.

“Suddenly a door cracked open and someone shouted ‘Is someone out there?’ By now the pain was settling in and I could not yell out. As a matter of fact I could only say ‘yeah,’” he said.

Soldiers brought Hall back inside the building. While Special Forces medics evacuated Hall to the aid station and later to the 28th Combat Support Hospital, McCallum accompanied him.

“He was telling me jokes, but I just wasn’t in the laughing mood. He stayed until I went into the operating room,” Hall said. “He also told me he felt responsible for my injuries because he did not ask me to stay in his room to talk like he usually does.”

“At the CASH I finally saw the injury to my legs. I saw the holes in my legs and I was

**“No one knew I was back from leave and out there. I knew I had to fend for myself.”**



Photo by Alexandra Williams

Sgt. Stephen Hall of Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 2-3rd Field Artillery, displays photos of fellow Soldiers who are still in Iraq. Hall is recovering from injuries sustained during an attack on the Gunner Battalion headquarters Oct. 31.

afraid that I might lose them, especially after they told me that the injuries were very bad,” he said.

Besides the shrapnel in his legs Hall suffered from second degree burns to his face and body. He was medevaced to Landstuhl Medical Center for further treatment.

“At first I had to use a wheelchair, but I didn’t like that so I worked hard and after two weeks I was able to walk with crutches,” said Hall. “I know that soon I’ll be able to walk without them. Right now I am at a 90 percent recovery rate and soon I’ll be at 95 percent. I already know that I’ll have a limp for the rest of my life, but I don’t think that this will end my military career. I plan on staying in and retire from the Army.”

Reflecting on the deployment to Iraq Hall is proud that he went there with the Gunner Battalion, he said.

“Before we deployed we were a bunch of characters. Our platoon leader Staff Sgt. Tyrone Pinkins always told us that we had to become close to come home safe. Whenever Soldiers argued he told them to make up and after a while they did it on their own. We grew together,” he said.

“Before I was evacuated to Landstuhl the door to my room has opened and Staff Sgt.

Pinkins came into the room followed by the first sergeant and command sergeant major. The biggest surprise of all was when the door opened again and suddenly the entire Rough Rider platoon came in to farewell me. That almost brought tears to my eyes. I never knew that the guys liked me that much,” Hall said.

Hall said he is still in contact with his platoon via email to see what is going on with his buddies. “It’s eating at me right now that I can’t do anything else here but sit and answer the phone. I’d love to go back for the guys. I miss the leaders-to-Soldiers relationship. I should be with them. It’s hard to be here with everyone else I know being down-range. I am dead weight right now,” he said.

“I also can’t go home because due to the injuries to my legs I cannot sit in the plane. I’d really love to go home to see my wife and my daughters, because I know they are worried about me. They have not seen me since I left after the R&R,” he said. “If I could make a wish right now I’d wish that my next duty station would be in Texas so I could be with my family.”

Unit leaders have recommended Hall for the Purple Heart. The award should arrive within the next couple of weeks, officials said.

## Tax centers ready to provide assistance

By Capt. Christine Carlile  
Friedberg Legal Office

The tax season is upon us and Army tax centers will once again provide assistance with tax questions and electronic filing for eligible persons.

As usual there are several changes to the tax laws. Some of these changes benefit everyone such as reduced tax brackets and increased standard deductions. Others are specific to military members.

In 2003 Congress passed the Military Family Tax Relief Act. Some benefits of that Act include an expansion of



areas classified as combat zones or qualified hazardous duty areas a change concerning the sale of a principal residence and an above the line deduction for Reservists travel expenses.

Continuing benefits include an extension to file taxes if you are living abroad and exclusion of foreign earned income. Deployed personnel have 180 days after returning from a deployment to file their taxes. Even though their income may be exempt it is still necessary for deployed personnel to file a return.

To file your taxes through a military tax center you will need to bring your W-2 and all other tax-related forms and sources of information, the forms 1098 and 1099, the previous

year’s return, your Social Security card and ITIN number, any child care financial statements, and spouses of deployed Soldiers need to bring a Power of Attorney.

The Friedberg Tax Center at Ray Barracks, located in Building 3635, Room 100, is already providing assistance. The center can be reached at mil 324-2275/2276/2277.

The Giessen Tax Center will have a delayed opening scheduled for March 2. The center will be located in Building 7, Room 254 and can be reached at mil 343-8261/8268.

If you wish to complete your own taxes you can get assistance at any military tax center, through your unit tax adviser or check out [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) where you can get forms and instructions.



# 284th BSB – Friedberg, Giessen

## Friedberg Soldiers treat injured, sick in Iraq

### Members of the 501st FSB aid station care for 1st Brigade Soldiers

Story and photo by Spc. Ryan Smith  
372nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

From traumas to sick call, the 501st Forward Support Battalion's aid station provides care for 1st Brigade Soldiers in Iraq.

The aid station, located at the battalion's Provider Forward Operating Base in Baghdad, provides Level II care, meaning it is capable of handling patients with more serious illnesses or injuries than smaller aid stations posted on for more forward units, said Capt. Bryony Soltis, field surgeon with the 501st FSB.

In addition to equipment for typical sick call and emergency care, the aid station has an X-ray machine,

lab and dental facilities. The aid station can also hold 40 patients for up to 72 hours, she said.

The aid station treats about 10-20 patients daily. Most patients are Soldiers seeking treatment during sick call for orthopedic problems or, most recently, flu symptoms.

One good sign, Soltis said, is that the number of trauma cases in the aid station has greatly decreased. In the past six weeks, only two Soldiers have required evacuation to more advanced medical facilities.

Pvt. 1 Lisa Umberger, a medic with Company C, 501st FSB, a Soldier who started work at the aid station just weeks out of initial entry training, said she has the best job she could ask for.

While the doctors diagnose patients and recommend treatment, medics such as Umberger are the first to see the patients coming through the door. They screen the patients, checking vital signs, such as temperature, heart rate and blood pressure. "We check for the little



Capt. Bryony Soltis (center), 501st FSB field surgeon, and Sgt. Patricia Batson, combat medic with Company C, 501st FSB, examine Sgt. Michael J. Crouse of the 186th Military Police Company at the 501st FSB aid station.

things you can't see," Umberger said.

The medics ask the patients about their symptoms, medical history and allergies. Once they are through with their screening, they will brief the doctor on the

patient's condition.

"The doctor will examine the patient and make her diagnosis," Umberger said. "Capt. Soltis works with me and explains what's going on while we're with a patient."

Umberger said she appreciates

the opportunity to perform her mission in Baghdad and is excited about the future explaining that she wants to become an emergency medical technician as a civilian or advance to Army flight-medical school.

"I'm glad I'm here," she said.

## Community spotlights

### Dietician sought for WIC-O

Choctaw Management Services Enterprise seeks a part-time registered nurse or dietician for its Women, Infants and Children-Overseas Program in the 284th Base Support Battalion. A four-year degree is required. Anyone interested in providing education and supplemental foods to families in the 284th BSB should call Mary Schrank at civ(06033)925 736.

### Chapel jobs in Giessen

Giessen Protestant and Gospel services seek piano players, a watch care coordinator and watch care workers. For details about salary call the 284th Base Support Battalion Chaplains Office at mil 343-8020.

### Auto Crafts specials in February

Giessen and Friedberg Auto Crafts Shops offer special car rental deals in February. Customers receive a \$20 discount on any vehicle rented for a week or more. Both shops offer free oil and filter changed Feb. 14 for the first three customers at both locations. Customers must bring oil and filter and mention read about the special offer in the *Herald Union*. For more information call Friedberg Auto

Crafts at civ (06031) 81-3218, mil 324-3218 or Giessen Auto Crafts at civ (0641) 402-7050 or mil 343-7050.

### Clear cars through customs

To clear from ownership of a car Soldiers and spouses are required

to report to the local Customs Office. This applies to totaled cars, cars that will be turned in to the scrap yard because of ETS and PCS moves and when selling a car to a dealer or local national. Filling out the proper paperwork will also speed up the process when clear-

ing from your local post, customs officials said. For more information about any aspect of clearing customs call mil 343-6017.

### VA briefing

A representative from the Department of Veterans Affairs will

provide information on a wide variety of veteran's benefits during a two-hour briefing March 4, April 7, May 20, June 4 and 25, July 22 and Aug. 13. Call the Army Career and Alumni Program in Giessen at mil 343-9332 to find out times and location.

# 284th BSB – Friedberg, Giessen

## Community spotlights

### Slyter wins Spelling Bee contest

Congratulations to Giessen Elementary School 6th-grader Amber Slyter for winning the school's Spelling Bee contest held Jan. 21 at the school. Slyter will represent the school at the European competition to be held in May.

### American Heart Month at clinic

In honor of the American Heart Month the Butzbach Health Clinic invites ID cardholders for a cardiovascular risk assessment including blood pressure check and a cholesterol screening. The check is available every Tuesday from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. in February. For more information call mil 345-4040 or civ (06033)983 240.

### Outprocessing briefings

Community outprocessing briefings are required 75-90 days before a Soldier's effective DEROS or separation date. The next briefing is scheduled for Feb. 10 at 10 a.m. at the ITC classroom in Giessen and Feb. 24 at 10 a.m. at the Old Ironside Theater in Friedberg. Spouses of deployed Soldiers scheduled to outprocess are invited and strongly encouraged to attend. For details call mil 343-8077.

### Trip to Garmisch

Outdoor Recreation hosts a ski trip to Garmisch Feb. 13-16. The cost is \$169 and includes two overnights with breakfast. For details call mil 343-8202.

### Friedberg Bowl update

The Friedberg Bowling Center hosts **Uniform Bowling** every day from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Everyone in uniform can bowl two games for 75 cents. Shoe rental is free. Bowl a strike with

Saddam Hussein on the head pin and get a free combo meal; hit Osama Bin Laden and bowl for free; or hit Kim Jong Il and get a free



Photo by Alexandra Williams

### AFAP needs support

Florine Hurdle (left to right), Tienelle Suggs and Ana Sanabria sign up as Army Family Action Plan delegates for the upcoming conference Feb. 17 while Maritza Ramirez of the 284th Base Support Battalion Army Community Service hands them information material. AFAP provides Soldiers and families a chance to let leaders know what is working, what needs to be improved and how to fix problems to improve quality of life. Issues can be dropped off at any of the drop boxes in the community. The AFAP team also seeks delegates to help decide the priority of issues. For more information call ACS in Giessen at mil 343-7618 or in Friedberg at mil 324-3465.

game during **Bad Guy Bowling. Fat Coupon Books** are available at the bowling center for \$20. The book is valid throughout the 284th BSB and contains an array of discounts and free items totaling \$270. For details call mil 324-3270.

### Ironsides Lanes events

The Ironsides Lanes bowling center Americana Diner in Giessen celebrates **National Kraut and Frankfurter Week** Feb. 10-13. Chicago and New York style Frankfurters will also be available. **Mardi Gras Fat Tuesday** will be hosted Feb. 24 from 4-9 p.m. Bring your friends and party New Orleans style,

with beads, music and food. For details call mil 343-6172/7702.

### Storytelling hour

In recognition of the Month of the Military Child in April Giessen Library hosts storytelling tours for children grades one to four every Saturday in April. Tours include a bus trip within the area to the storytelling sites of interest to children and will last two to three hours. If redeployment interferes with the tours the storytelling will be hosted at the Giessen Library. Sign up is open from March 1-31, and parental approval is required. Registration must be done in person. Space

is limited and the priority list will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis. For more information call Ann Burski at mil 343-1740.

### National Prayer Breakfast

The 284th Base Support Battalion Chaplains Office hosts a National Prayer Breakfast Feb. 24 at 7 a.m. at the Alpine Club on the Giessen Depot and at 11:30 a.m. at the Villa Calabria on Ray Barracks in Friedberg. Tickets can be obtained from rear detachment commanders or the Chaplains Office located in Building 115 on the Giessen Depot. For details call mil 343-8020.

### Thriller at the Keller Theater

The Keller Theater in Giessen hosts "Murder by Misadventure," a thriller by Edward Taylor Feb. 13, 14, 19-21 and 26-28 at 7:30 p.m. Auditions for "Another Antigone," a drama by A.R. Gurney, will be held Feb. 23 and 24 at 7 p.m. For more information call the theater at mil 343-6515.

### Weekend child care

Child and Youth Services host a **Super Saturday child care service** Feb. 7 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Friedberg Child Development Center and Feb. 28 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Giessen CDC. The service is available for all CLEOS-registered children age six weeks to 11 years old. Respite cards for E-4s and below will be accepted. **A Parent's Night Out** will be offered Feb. 20 from 6:30-10:30 p.m. at the Butzbach CDC. The cost is \$5. Children must be CLEOS registered. Payment and reservation deadline is Feb. 13. For more information call CLEOS at mil 343-7028.

### Children's movie day canceled

The movie day for children in Giessen has been canceled from February through April because of redeployment training. The next children's movie day is scheduled for May 11. For details call Deborah Gantt at mil 343-6039 or civ (0641)402-6039.

## Training prepares families for redeployment

By Martha Pinion

284th Base Support Battalion Army Community Service

Many spouses of deployed Soldiers are having a tough time coping with the long separation from their loved ones. It is difficult enough raising children with two parents — even more so with only one.

Spouses with and without children are feeling the effects of the "empty bed," "empty chair" syndrome. There are feelings of loneliness, stress and in some cases depression.

These situations and feelings are common for couples that separate for a significant period of time, said officials, adding, "You are not alone."

In order to control those feelings, it's important to explore what changes have occurred with family members and what expectations family members may have upon reunion, officials recommend.

There are also significant feelings of self-doubt many people experience during a separation. Questions such as "Will I still be desirable?" "Will I be afraid of intimacy?" "What will he/she be like when he/she gets back?" "What kind of trauma has the deployed spouse been through?" "Should we talk about it?" "What changes have occurred?" are all common.

People who are "new" to the military and deployments might want to consider seeking additional training. Even "old hands" at deployment separation should think about attending refresher training.

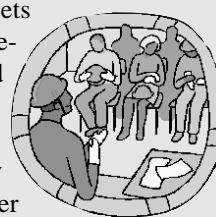
This is the longest deployment most military members have gone through since the Vietnam War. It is very dangerous. There are long time military spouses who have not experienced the length and danger of this particular deploy-

ment. They may be candidates for this training as well. And as leaders within their commands, they could be providing good examples for the younger less experienced spouses by attending the training, officials said.

Training for spouses takes place every Tuesday at Friedberg Army Community Service from 9-11 a.m. and at Giessen ACS from 1-3 p.m. This is a relaxed, non-threatening atmosphere where people can express their feelings and concerns without outside pressures.

Spouses are best served by this training if their deployed spouses are returning on Rest and Recuperation leave, to PCS or ETS within eight weeks or less, ACS officials said. Special training can be arranged for groups during the day or in the evening as required.

To register for a class or to arrange for group training call Friedberg ACS at civ (06031) 81-3465 or Giessen ACS at civ (0641) 402-7618.



## ICE seeks customer feedback online

By Alexandra Williams

284th Base Support Battalion Public Affairs Office

Have you considered putting your ideas on ICE yet?

You can use the online Interactive Customer Evaluation comment cards to make suggestions for ways to improve services, to praise an outstanding effort or to simply make your ideas about ways to improve services heard.

"The ICE program allows the leadership to see if services offered within the 284th Base Support Battalion meet the community's needs," said Charles Butler, 284th BSB Directorate of Plans and Programs customer relation assistant.

"We are doing real well. We have many hits and comments, but we are still trying to solicit more comments, because we want to know how well the BSB provides a service and what could be changed," he said.

Customer may either use hard copies of the ICE cards or fill them out electronically.

The ICE program is accessible on the Internet at [www.giessen.army.mil](http://www.giessen.army.mil). Click on the ICE Customer Cards icon and either type in the name of the organization and hit search or scroll down to the listing of directorates in the 284th BSB, click on the desired service provider until you have found the office you are looking for and fill out the card by checking the respective blocks.

"ICE comment cards do not require a name, it can be done anonymously. But if you desire a response, you must leave your name and/or your email address," Butler said.

Statements should be as detailed as possible.

"Regardless if the remarks are positive or negative, we appreciate detailed information such as what type of service is being commented on, is a particular person or the entire staff involved, what was really good and what could be changed. Every detail is important. All copies of the ICE card go to the BSB commander and deputy," he

said.

"Currently we have a 95 percent satisfactory rate, and organizations that receive positive comments with a high satisfactory rate are the Child Development Center in Giessen, the Community Mail Room, Driver's Testing Station, the Housing Office to mention just a few," he said.

The power of the ICE comments should not be underestimated, he said.

"For example the fitness center hours have changed due to the suggestions on the Comment Cards," Butler said.

"Another source to suggest improvements in the community is the Commander's Hotline," he added. "The hotline can be reached at mil 343-9999 and is connected to an answering machine. Residents can call 24/7 and make recommendations on how the BSB can improve its service. Leaving a name is again optional."

## Dreaming today for a better tomorrow

### Community members gather to celebrate Martin Luther King's legacy

By Petra Roberts

284th Base Support Battalion Public Affairs Office

"It is important for all of us to get together here today as a community, regardless of race or origin. Dr. Martin Luther King would have wanted it that way," said Timothy Battle, a consular aid with Central Texas College in Giessen, to open the 284th Base Support Battalion's Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. birthday celebration at Giessen's Alpine Club Jan. 21.

After a musical tribute performed by Kirsten Cervantes, an employee with Giessen Army Community Service, retired Lt. Gen. Andrew P. Chambers, University of

Maryland University College Europe chancellor, shared his thoughts about the life and accomplishments of Dr. King.

Referring to King as a soldier, a soldier of the highest magnitude, Chambers said he fought the toughest war of all wars — a war against tyranny, oppression and injustice in the United States.

"Dr. King led by example and by love — love of this great land and love of freedom. He was a soldier in the truest sense of the word," Chambers said.

Recalling some of King's accomplishments, Chambers said few people throughout history have had the impact and achieved as much as the civil rights leader. He compared King's efforts to those of Presidents George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. "While these men lived centuries apart and were of different races, their causes were essentially the same — freedom

from tyranny, oppression and injustice," said Chambers.

This fight for freedom was important to them and still holds valid today, he said.

The beauty of King's accomplishment, said Chambers, is that it was all done without violence. Although King's life was constantly threatened, he often received more than 100 death threats a day, he continued his peaceful fight for equality.

"One of the greatest messages Dr. King has given us was that 'we must all learn to live together as brothers. We do not live in a world alone. Our brothers and sisters are here too,'" Chambers said.

"Have you ever thought about where we would be today had Dr. King not passed our way? He definitely contributed to the shaping of America's future. Martin Luther King's contributions to our history place him in this inimitable position.

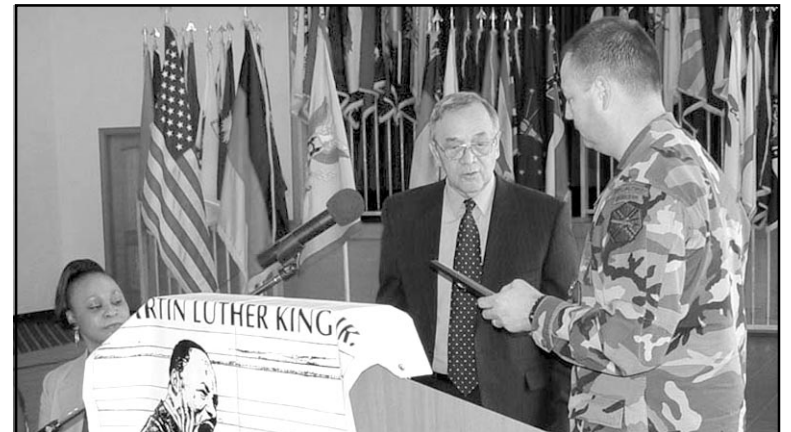


Photo by Petra Roberts

284th BSB commander Lt. Col. Bart Shreve (right) presents guest speaker retired Lt. Gen. Andrew P. Chambers with a certificate of appreciation at this year's Dr. Martin Luther King birthday celebration.

He was instrumental in helping us realize and rectify those unspeakable flaws which were tarnishing the name of America," said Chambers.

Chambers reminded listeners that the attack on King was more than an assault on one man. "The

real target was freedom, justice and the American dream," he said. "So we must all keep the dream alive by being active and helping the needy. Do not let this great soldier have died in vain. Try to understand what he wanted and what he meant when he said 'I have a Dream.'"

## ACS programs

### Translator service

The Butzbach Outreach Center offers translator service for those mind-boggling letters or to call local vendors such as the phone company every Wednesday from 10-11 a.m. For details call civ (06033) 925 329.

### Employment readiness training

Army Community Service in Giessen and Friedberg offers employment readiness training for job seekers. Classes offer comprehensive employment information and assistance with job listings, applications and more. For more information call Dan Adams in Giessen at mil 343-6038 or Tim

Fitzgerald in Friedberg at mil 324-3421.

### Care providers sought

The Exceptional Family Member Program seeks respite care providers for families with special needs (children and adults). Anyone interested may call Florine King at mil 343-7618.

### Coping with stress, anger

ACS hosts a variety of stress and anger management classes in Giessen, Butzbach and Friedberg. to all community members. For location and times call ACS in Friedberg at mil 324-3465 or ACS Giessen at mil 343-7618.



## Hanau aviators rule the sky in Iraq

### Members of 3-58th Aviation control air traffic around Balad

Story and photos by Dennis Johnson

414th Base Support Battalion Public Affairs Office

Soldiers of the 3-58th Aviation Regiment don't fly over the Iraqi landscape, but they do keep the skies safe for those who do. The air-traffic control regiment based on Fliegerhorst Kaserne is as important to Army aviation missions as the folks who do the flying.

"We deal with everything to do with air-traffic control in Balad," said Staff Sgt. Richard Kopf. "We provide aircraft separation, we pass intelligence to the pilots and provide guidance around threats and provide landing clearances. We also guide aircraft as they assist ground troops in their missions and hand off the aircraft leaving our sectors to the next air-traffic controllers. But most of all we just make sure all aircraft arrive safely and orderly."

Kopf, age 33, from Fort Walton Beach, Fla., is the tower chief for the Army in Balad.

The tall modern control tower where he works looms over the runways and taxiways of this former Iraqi Air Force base and training academy. Air traffic controllers must hoof it up the stairs to the tower control room since fleeing Iraqi troops destroyed the elevators last April. They also cannibalized all the radio and radar equipment and instruments in the tower. Plywood panels filled with American radios and radar equipment have that jury-rigged appearance but get the job done.

Across the airfield from the tower are the two nearly parallel runways which were cratered by American bombs, one every few hundred yards right down the centerline of



A U.S. Air Force C-5 Galaxy prepares for take-off from the Logistical Support Activity Anaconda in Balad, Iraq, Jan. 18.

each runway and across many of the taxiways. The runway damage has been repaired with new concrete, but Delta taxiway is still unusable due to three bomb craters.

At the far ends of the airfield are huge "hardened" concrete hangars, sometimes called "turtlebacks," that once housed Iraqi war planes. These are now used for housing, workshops and one is the social and dining hall for Bravo Company of 1-501st Aviation Regiment, another Fliegerhorst-based unit.

Sgt. 1st Class James McMillion III is the air traffic control chief in charge of all Army air-traffic operations. Working with a counterpart from the Air Force, they make sure the large fixed-wing Air Force planes, such as the gigantic C-5 and C-17 cargo planes don't mix it up with the much smaller, and much more numerous, Army helicopters. Apache attack helicopters, Blackhawk utility helicopters and Chinook cargo helicopters are all based on Balad's vast airfield. The Army also operates a few airplanes from Balad to carry passengers and for reconnaissance.

The tower is high with a view of many miles in every direction and the radars are good, but control towers normally only guide aircraft for the last five nautical miles before landing. Aircraft approaching Balad are controlled by "Baghdad radio." This controller vectors the aircraft to a designated approach to Balad airport and then hands it off to the controllers at "Balad tower."

### Joint service duty

Army controllers work side by side with Air Force controllers as "there are a limited number of controllers in all the services," said Kopf. "Also, the knowledge we can share between our services is great."

"We have a preponderance of rotary aircraft (helicopters), about 90 percent, while the Air Force has about 90 percent fixed-wing aircraft (airplanes), so we have different skills," said Capt. Kurt Stuckwisch, 3-58th commander. "With helicopters, the volume is greater, you have to talk to more pilots and they fly a lot lower and slower than Air Force planes. They're also more maneuverable — you can tell a helicopter to stop and hover, while you can't tell a C-5 to stop."

"You've got to think three steps ahead. Sometimes you're talking to 18 helicopters



Air Force Staff Sgt. Judson Osborne (left), 1st Operational Support Squadron, and Pfc. Joshua Meister, Company C, 3-58th Aviation Regiment, control air traffic at Balad, Iraq.

and three fixed-wing," said Kopf.

"It's like a 3-D chess game, that's what it's like. And not everyone is cut out to be an air traffic controller," said McMillion.

Aircraft approaching an airfield are at their most vulnerable. It's at low altitudes and slow approach speeds when they're most likely to be hit by a shoulder launched surface to air missile. These weapons are still overly abundant in Iraq. Aircraft often drop a series of flares on approach or departure to draw away any heat seeking missiles that may be launched. When this system of countermeasures is on "automatic" the flares will often drop if the system picks up any stray radar signal or catches a glint of sunlight that resembles a missile launch. But every time the flares are ejected, looking like falling fireworks, doesn't mean there was a real threat to the aircraft.

Other measures to thwart enemy attacks on coalition aircraft include having the aircraft make a tight pattern for landing with higher than normal approach angles. Pilots want to stay high over enemy territory and then get on the ground quickly once over the airfield. At night, landing lights on the aircraft stay off until just moments before touch-

down. You can hear the aircraft fly over, but on a moonless night, you don't see them.

While Air Force and Army airplanes come and go, bringing in troops and materiel, Apache, Blackhawk and Kiowa helicopters fly reconnaissance and ground support missions around the perimeter and over the adjacent countryside.

### Maintenance mission

On the ground with the soldiers who keep the planes in the air is Sgt. Troy Price from Centralia, Wash. Price performs organizational maintenance on all the wheeled vehicles for the 3-58th. He's been in Iraq since April and Balad since September. "When we first got here, they were just putting everything together, but every location we've been in, in Iraq, has been great. Our chain of command has taken great care of us," said Price.

The 3-58th Aviation Regiment works relentlessly to keep order in the chaotic skies above Balad. "This is probably the most challenging airspace Army air-traffic controllers are working," said Stuckwisch. "We set the rules of the sky."



Capt. Kurt Stuckwisch, 3-58th Aviation, talks to Iraqi contractor Mohammed Assa'd about construction projects at Balad airfield.



## Super Sapper PT motivates engineers

### 130th Engineer Brigade commander, chaplain team up to provide inspirational workout for Soldiers in Iraq

By Jayme Loppnow

130th Engineer Brigade Public Affairs Office

Soldiers in the 130th Engineer Brigade are getting quite a bit more out of their usual physical training sessions in Iraq thanks to the Super Sapper Physical Training program.

They get a one-on-one chat with the brigade commander, Col. Gregg Martin, during the challenging PT session followed by an inspirational thought and prayer given by the brigade chaplain, Lt. Col. Randall Dolinger.

The program started with senior leaders in the brigade and eventually branched out to the many units that fall under the 130th umbrella in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Dolinger said the program has resulted in more interaction and stronger bonds with the Soldiers. "After the troops run with us they were always quicker to talk to us in the chow hall and have a smile ready when they see us," said Dolinger. "People are more open to talk to me in counseling and to just come by the office."

As a result of the success of the program, Martin and Dolinger upped the stakes and began tougher workouts; running up bunkers backwards, carrying logs and sandbags, rolling large tires and other challenging exercises. "The

amazing thing has been that the harder the PT session, the more the Soldiers have come back and said they really appreciated us coming," said Dolinger. "It became more than just a run with the colonel. It became a challenge. We started running up and down rock piles and really pushing the Soldiers."

It became so much of a challenge that Martin started sending out Soldiers before the sessions to scout out the tallest obstacles they could tackle the following day. "Col. Martin has me drive out the night before each run to conduct a reconnaissance of the rock and gravel piles to make sure they are high enough to run on the next morning," said Sgt. HERRICA BONILLA.

"I actually witnessed Col. Martin send the chaplain over to a dozer operator and tell him to stop working so that we could run up the giant rock pile he was working on," said Capt. Jon Stover.

Some Soldiers anticipate the mornings with the commander and have been working out twice as hard just so they can keep up, said Capt. Kurt Zwoboda.

"The Super Sapper PT program has definitely gotten the brigade in better physical shape," said Zwoboda. "The company commanders are scared to death of getting a late night phone call from Col. Martin informing them he will be doing PT with their company in the morning, thus they are doubling up on PT sessions just in case they receive the call."

Dolinger said he believes that his and Martin's age also inspire the troops to give it their all. "PT is a great equalizer,"

said Dolinger. "It doesn't matter what rank you are, how old you are, or what gender you are. No matter what your race or religion, the question is, 'Can you hang?' I think the fact that the commander and I are both over 45 encourages the troops not to quit." Dolinger recalled a comment from a Soldier from the 82nd Airborne Division during a particularly challenging PT session. "He said, 'We aren't going to let Grandpa beat us. Come on let's go.' The troops gain a respect for both the colonel and me because we don't hide behind our age and rank to hang back. Instead we are leading the way."

"Col. Martin finally found a PT run to make my legs sore," said 1st Lt. P.J. Inskeep, 74th Engineer Dive Team commander. "But I would never let him know that."

The PT sessions are meant to motivate, not for anyone to wind up in the hospital, said Dolinger.

"We are not trying to kill anyone," he said. "We just want them to know that they can do more than they think. God doesn't hold us accountable for what we can't do; only what we can do," said Dolinger.

"The only issue is that God has more faith in us than we do," he said. "He believes we can handle more. We need to trust him that he won't take us beyond what we are able."

"He will give us the strength or He will give us a way out. If you can take another step, than you need to take it," Dolinger said. "Don't worry about the one after that. God has his own weight program – wait on the Lord and you shall renew your strength, you shall mount up with wings like eagles. You shall run and not grow weary. You shall walk and not faint."



## Students learn from grand master

### Teaching the Korean martial art of tae kwon do

By Dennis Johnson

414th Base Support Battalion Public Affairs Office

Master Kwang Nam Park, a seventh-degree black-belt grand master teaches American children and adults in Hanau the Korean martial art of tae kwon do.

A grand master in the World Tae Kwon Do Federation, Park was one of the first to bring tae kwon do to Germany some 30 years ago. As a contract instructor for Child and Youth Services programs, Park teaches the Olympic-style tae kwon do at Pioneer Fitness Center.

"He's been teaching for me for the past four years, and I'm doing everything I can to keep him here," said David Knighton, recreation contract specialist for CYS. "There aren't many people in Germany with his credentials."

Last October Master Park's team of 10 children from the Hanau community traveled to Bottrop for an International Open Tae Kwon Do competition. Seven teams from Germany and Spain including the Hanau children competed. "Everyone went home with a trophy — two won first place in their categories and the other eight kids came in second or third," said James Sparks, assistant coach. "Due to the total points accumulated, we won third place overall team."

One young competitor who won first place in the yellow belt with green stripe category (in his weight and age category) was Derek Grice, age 7.

"Derek's always been into sports — baseball and basketball — and started tae kwon do only in March. This was his first competition," said Valerie Grice, Derek's mother. "It was a real learning experience, watching them fight. We weren't expecting the aggressiveness of the opponents, but it's all part of what they have to do. One kid got kicked in the face. But Master Park doesn't teach such aggressiveness, he is teaching them the old way, the old form where discipline is most important," said Grice.



Photo by Dennis Johnson

Kwang Nam Park, a grand master tae kwon do instructor, works out with Derek Grice, age 7.

With typical 7-year-old succinctness, Derek said his first competition was "good." About tae kwon do, Derek said he liked "the kicks. You get to kick the pads."

His training regime? "I fight my brother sometimes to train."

Also winning first place in the boys up to age 13 with a yellow belt category was William Carl Santamaria.

Park and Sparks teach two classes of tae kwon do for children age 6-17 years old on Wednesdays and Fridays from

4-5 p.m. and 5-6 p.m. Adult classes are offered on Wednesdays and Fridays from 6-7 p.m. The cost for children is \$30 per month and \$35 per month for adults. All classes are held in the Pioneer Fitness Center.

Children must be registered with CLEOS and have a current health assessment. Call CLEOS at mil 322-9144 to register and get the assessment. For adults and children to join the tae kwon do class, call David Knighton at mil 322-9919/9882.

## AFAP: Help improve quality of life through the Army Family Action Plan

By Rick Krenz

Army Community Service

Getting new street lights doesn't sound like a big deal. But the process of getting them is a big deal.

Thanks to an issue raised at last year's 414th Base Support Battalion Army Family Action Plan Conference there are now lights at the bus stop adjacent to the entrance of Hanau's Wolfgang Shopping Center. AFAP is a "grass-roots" forum for members of military communities to voice their opinions on how to bring about positive changes in Army life. Every member of every community has the opportunity to submit a problem or issue to be discussed at the annual AFAP conference. Issues are divided into work groups for consideration.

In the 414th BSB there are seven work groups. They are Consumer Services, Family Readiness, Medical and Dental, Housing and Relocation, Education and Employment, Force Support and a Teen Group.

Every issue submitted is worked by the most appropriate work group during the conference. Subject Matter Experts are available throughout the conference to assist with any legal or regulatory concerns. Many issues are resolved simply by being discussed during the conference and by being brought to the attention of the people who are able to make the local changes, the SMEs.

At the end of the conference each work group reports its top issues to the BSB commander. These are entered into the Community Action Plan and assigned an action officer to work the issue at the BSB level. The commander, along with the AFAP Steering Committee, works to solve these issues.

The group meets quarterly to discuss the progress of each issue. Those issues exceeding the capability of the BSB are forwarded to the 104th Area Support Group where they are reviewed and solved or moved up the chain of command to the next higher level, the Installation Management Agency-Europe. The process continues there, too. Issues are sent to Department of the Army level or solved.

Not all issues can be solved. Some issues brought forward need changes that are too expensive, illegal or complicated.

Parts of Army life now taken for granted by many Soldiers and their families are former AFAP issues. AFAP was instrumental in having the Service Members' Group Life Insurance increased from \$50,000 to \$200,000, the Family Member Preference for employment, Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers, Family Readiness Groups and Army Family Team Building programs. Locally, in addition to the new street lights, improvements to the Hanau High School track and weight room, and a spouse sponsorship program are issues that come from prior AFAP conferences.

As you go around the 414th Base Support Battalion look for the AFAP issue boxes. Take a few minutes to grab a form, fill it in and submit it. The only way to change the Army is to take the time to tell the command what you need. Identify the problem, explain why it's a problem and recommend a remedy.

The annual 414th BSB AFAP conference will be held Feb. 10-11 at the Community Activity Center, Building 1351 on Fliegerhorst Kaserne, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. To submit an issue or to participate in the conference call Rick J. Krenz at mil 322-5308, civ (06181) 88-5308 or send an email to [Rick.Krenz@104asg.mwr.army.mil](mailto:Rick.Krenz@104asg.mwr.army.mil).



Photo by Dennis Johnson

### Drive to arrive and survive

A display at the entrance of Pioneer Kaserne may seem graphic, but it is meant to remind drivers to always avoid mixing drinking and driving. Safety managers recommend having a designated driver, slowing down during inclement weather and making sure vehicles are in tip-top shape to avoid accidents and save lives.